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ABSTRACT

The 3 main objectives of this study, the fourth and final phase of an investigation to determine the information and services obtained and desired by rural parents during 4 stages of child rearing, were to determine: (1) the sources from which parents of adolescents received information and services regarding child care and development; (2) the types of information and services received; and (3) the types of sources of information for which parents expressed a need. Forty-five free-recall and forced-choice questions were asked of 408 rural mothers of children aged 13 to 19 selected at random from school records from a 3-county area in North Carolina. Included among the findings were the following: that reading materials, the school, and the church were the most frequent sources of assistance to mothers in rearing their adolescents; reading was a more common practice among the better educated mothers; poorer educated mothers showed little initiative or desire to contact the school for assistance; mothers in general exhibited little concern for their adolescents' sexual development, yet the types of publications the mothers would most like to receive were related to dating and marriage; and the social concern most prevalent among mothers was youth's irresponsibility. A related document is ED 029 109. (JB)

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Information and Services

Obtained and Desired By Parents of Adolescents

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PREFACE

This study is the fourth and final phase of an investigation to determine the information and services obtained and desired by rural parents during four stages of child rearing. Three previous reports dealt with parents of young children from birth to three years (Sperry and Garner, 1962), parents of preschool children ages three to six years (Sperry and Garner, 1965), and parents of elementary school children ages six to thirteen years (Garner and Sperry, 1968).

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Information and Services Obtained and Desired By Parents of Adolescents

INTRODUCTION

As children grow from infancy into adolescence, parents are faced with many different and confounding questions. The earliest concerns of mothers, in particular, are those revolving around the physical or routine care of their infants (Sperry and Garner, 1962). It is easily understandable why young mothers turn to the sources close to them, namely physicians and grandmothers.

As the child begins to communicate with those about him and is more physically mobile, mothers are besieged with problems other than the child's physical care. Many concerns are then associated with the preschooler's social and psychological development (Sperry and Garner, 1965). Physicians and grandmothers are still important sources to mothers of preschool children. However, many mothers at this stage of child rearing begin to rely on their own experience or intuition. This is probably due to the intangible nature of many of their concerns.

Upon the child's entering school, new kinds of concerns present themselves. Mothers become aware of the need for children to communicate well with their teachers and with their peers (Garner and Sperry, 1968). A new emphasis is placed upon character and religious development. As the child's world extends beyond that of his family, mothers begin to look to sources outside of the home to assist them in the rearing of their children. Institutions and agencies, such as the school, the church, and the health department become important sources of assistance.

OBJECTIVES

To what extent do rural mothers perceive problems with their adolescents and to what persons, agencies or other sources do they look for assistance? The three main objectives of the present study were to determine: (1) the sources from which parents of adolescents received information and services regarding child care and development; (2) the types of information and services regarding child care and development which were received; and (3) the types or sources of information for which parents expressed a need. It was also the purpose of the project to determine the relationship between each of the above objectives and such demographic characteristics as the age, education, residential background, special interests and community participation of mothers, fathers, and adolescents.

SAMPLING AND ANALYTICAL PROCEDURES

Three North Carolina counties from which the sample was drawn were selected to include a range in levels of living, extent of community organization, and channels of communication. The eligible population consisted of mothers of school children from 12 to 19 years of age who lived in rural areas as defined by the 1960 U. S. Bureau of the Census.

A total of 408 mothers were selected at random from their adolescents' school records. The mean age for mothers was 41.8 years. The majority of the sample were housewives or assisted their husbands in their work. When mothers worked outside of the home, they usually were service workers. This occupational type was in relation to the respondents' average educational level of 9.2 years of schooling. The majority of the mothers had been reared on farms and had at least one child other than the adolescent in focus (See Appendix A for Demographic Data).

Questionnaires, each consisting of 48 items of information, were administered orally to the sample and responses were tape recorded. The questionnaire consisted of free recall and probing (forced choice) items.

All pertinent data gathered during the survey were coded, and punched on computer cards for electronic processing. Contingency chi-square values were used to signal significant associations between the questionnaire items and demographic data, or independent variables. The total number of chi-square tables examined was 1,200. Of this number, 263, or 21.9 percent, were significant at the .05 level or beyond. Description was given only to those data that were not isolated and that appeared to fall into some patterns of relationship.

RESULTS

Sources and Types of Information and Services (Free Recall)

Sources of Information. The first part of the interview questionnaire was designed to allow mothers free response (primary recall) to a number of items. All questions on the questionnaire, beyond the demographic data, were answered for the entire period since the child started to school, unless a different time period was stated. Mothers were told, "Keep in mind that we want to know the ways you have gained help or information about (name of child)." The first question asked the respondent was, "Since (name of child) entered seventh grade, what persons, agencies, materials, or other sources have helped you know what to do to understand or help him?" Mothers' responses usually fell into one or more of eight possible categories (Table 1).

Table 1. Mothers' Sources of Assistance (Free Recall)

Sources	Percent
Reading	17.0
School personnel	16.8
Church personnel and activities	13.8
Relatives and friends	12.3
Experience, observation, intuition	6.2
Doctors and other related personnel	3.0
Organizations and personnel	2.2
Other	4.4
N = 271	

The largest percent of mothers (33.6) either did not respond to the question or else reported that they had used no source of information. The remaining 271 respondents recalled a total of 432 sources. The mean number of sources recalled by the respondents was 1.0. The most frequent sources of information were reading and school personnel, followed by church personnel and activities. A small number reported their previous experience, observation or intuition as sources of help. Doctors and related personnel or organizations and personnel were infrequent sources of information.

The persons, agencies, materials, or other sources that mothers recalled as helping them understand their children were related to the children's extracurricular activities and home responsibilities; mothers' age, education, home economics background, special interests such as sports or civic organizations, and prior experience with children; husbands' education and special interests; families' participation; and the frequency of newspapers and magazines in the home.

Reliance upon experience, observation, and intuition was more characteristic of older women, 50-59 years of age, who received a weekly newspaper and whose children had few home responsibilities. Mothers who had received some home economics training in high school (1 year), and whose adolescents had several home responsibilities infrequently relied upon their own experience and intuition. Older mothers, 50-59 years of age, seldom reported having received information or help from relatives, friends, or nonprofessional persons. This was probably because, as the data indicated, they often had relied upon their own experience.

Physicians and medical personnel were used more as sources of information or help by families in which the mothers, fathers, and youth had a number of special interests or hobbies. Mothers frequently recalling physicians likewise had better than average educations (trade schools or some college) and there were indications of some degree of affluence as denoted by the number of magazines (5) in their homes. Implications were that mothers were more likely to have received information from physicians and medical personnel if they were active in the community and came from average or better level of living circumstances.

Similarly, mothers more frequently mentioned school personnel as a source if their children had four or more home responsibilities and if their husbands had completed college and had five or more special interests. The use of school sources was also in relation to the mother's having attended trade school or some college, and to her having five or more special interests and prior experiences with children. School sources were recalled less if the child in focus had no special interests and the mother had been to school for eight years or less.

As might be expected, reading materials had been sources of information to families in which mothers and fathers had at least high school educations and in which there were daily newspapers and magazines. Some home economics training in high school also contributed to mothers' reliance upon reading materials as resources in rearing their teenagers. Much literature on the child and family has been available through home economics classes for a number of years. The data indicated that mothers in the 40-49 age group seldom reported reading materials as a source because of their education level (eighth grade or less), and, subsequently, their lack of home economics training and exposure to certain reading materials.

Mothers' recall of organizations and personnel was associated with their education, their home economics background, and their families' participation. A higher educational level (high school graduation) and community participation characterized mothers who had received information from organizations. This was probably because of their accessibility to these resources. Similarly, indications were that families who had utilized church sources were probably active in the church as well as in a number of other community activities.

Most Helpful Sources of Information. After mothers freely stated their sources of information, they were asked, "Which of the sources that you named was most helpful to you?" Respondents recalled a single source (Table 2).

Table 2. Mothers' Most Helpful Source of Information (Free Recall)

Most Helpful Source	Percent
Church personnel and activities	24.6
School personnel or related sources	19.6
Relatives and friends	16.4
Reading	13.9
Experience, observation, intuition	7.4
Organizations and personnel	3.2
Doctors and other related personnel	2.4
No helpful source	12.5
N = 128	

Mothers responding to this item totaled 128. Of this number, 12.5 percent said that either they did not know which source had been most helpful or that no source had been most helpful. Church personnel and activities was reported as the most helpful source by the largest percent of mothers. Next in order of importance, respondents cited school personnel or related sources, relatives and friends, and reading. Few mothers recalled either experience and observation, organizations and personnel, or doctors and related personnel as helpful sources of information in rearing their children. With the exception of father's occupation, the sources that mothers considered most helpful were not related to the variables under investigation. Doctors and related personnel were mentioned more frequently by mothers whose husbands were professional or technical workers, while farmers' wives reported experience, observation and intuition as helpful sources.

Types of Information. Following the first primary recall item, respondents were asked, "What kinds of information or help did this source give?" Almost one-half of the mothers, or 49.2 percent, did not respond to the question. Mothers' lack of response was probably related to their inability to recall specific information over a period of time. The data showed that it was less difficult for mothers to recall their source of assistance than the specific information received from a source. Approximately 6 percent of the remaining 207 replied that they had received no information or help

from persons or related sources. Types of information or services named by the respondents fell into six categories (Table 3).

Table 3. Types of Information or Assistance Received By Mothers (Free Recall)

Types of Information	Percent
Nonspecific	36.7
School and education	23.0
Emotional and social development	18.0
Moral and spiritual development	10.1
Physical welfare	3.8
Special individual problems	2.4
No help	6.0
N = 207	

Mothers most frequently reported having received nonspecific types of information or assistance. Most such general information was about child development, rearing children, and previous experience. The next most frequent types of information or help received by mothers were regarding school and education which included studying habits and behavior at school. Emotional and social development information followed. Information relative to moral and spiritual development, physical welfare, and special individual problems were infrequent types mentioned. The sex of the youth in focus was the only variable found associated with the types of information or services received by mothers. Mothers of girls had less difficulty than boys' mothers in specifying the type of information that they had received. This was probably because much of the literature on the adolescent has centered on the physical changes in the young girl rather than in the boy.

Helpful Types. After mothers freely recalled the types of information that they had received they were asked, "Which kind of information or help was most helpful?" A considerable number of the mothers, 319 or 78.2 percent, did not answer the question. This high percentage of no response pointed out the increasing difficulty mothers experienced in recalling information from the source, to the type, to the most helpful type. Of the remaining respondents, 9.2 percent indicated that no information had been most helpful.

The most helpful information received by mothers from primary recall sources was usually nonspecific in nature (Table 4). Information included

Table 4. Most Helpful Type of Information (Free Recall)

Most Helpful Type	Percent
Nonspecific	31.4
Emotional and social development	29.2
School and education	16.8
Moral and spiritual development	7.8
Special individual problems	3.4
Physical welfare	2.2
No help	9.2
N = 78	

here, and mentioned by about 31 percent of the remaining mothers, was general information that varied with their needs. This classification was probably swelled with a number of "I don't know" responses thrown into the category. Emotional and social development information, which included discipline, understanding, personality, and behavior, was a most helpful source to approximately 30 percent of the respondents. School and education as a most helpful source of information was reported by the next largest percentage of mothers. Information received relative to moral and spiritual development, special individual problems, and physical welfare was seldom named by mothers.

Mothers of boys showed the same difficulty in naming their most helpful source of information as when they were asked the type of information received. When a helpful type was mentioned by any of the respondents, it was usually educational information. As observed throughout the study, more attention or value was placed on emotional and social development where some degree of affluence was indicated through the number of magazines in the homes.*

Information or Services Desired. After mothers were questioned as to the sources from which they had attained information or help and the types of information received they were asked, "What are the kinds of help or information that you would have liked?" Secondly, respondents were asked their preferred source for this information.

Approximately one-half, 49.0 percent, replied that there was no help or information to which they would liked to have had access. A total of 78, or 19.1 percent of the mothers, did not respond to the question. The high percentage of no information desired and no responses was probably related to the primary recall nature of the question. The largest number of mothers, 84, or 25.4 percent, desired nonspecific information. This category contained general information, reading material, and a wide range of answers. School or educational needs were desired by 12.4 percent of the respondents. Socialization and emotional controls assistance were preferred by 8.8 percent of the mothers.

Mothers were more likely to desire information if they had a number of outside interests and if they had a college background in home economics. Mothers of seventh grade students frequently either did not respond or said that they did not desire information. This latter observation is comprehensible in that many seventh grade students are in a latent period characteristic of preadolescence and consequently present fewer major problems to mothers. The need for information relating to school or an education was voiced more strongly by mothers who had attained a better than average education (some college); and whose husbands' professional or technical type occupation had been attained through a certain degree of educational achievement. More emphasis was placed on the need for information or help relative to social or emotional controls by mothers who had college educations and whose husbands held positions that were managerial or clerical in nature. Overall implications from the question of desired information were that, in most cases, those mothers who most frequently recognized the need for information on school or educational needs and on social or emotional controls were better educated, were involved in more

* Several socioeconomic and level of living scales include an account of the number of magazines or the frequency of newspapers in the home as components of the instruments.

areas of interests, and had husbands in higher ranked occupations than other mothers.

Sources of Information Desired. Following the question relating to information desired, mothers were asked, "From what sources would you like help or information of this sort?" A response to this item was given by 207 mothers, or 50.7 percent. The majority of the respondents, 57.0 percent, reported that they had no desired source of information. Mothers, proportionally speaking, preferred the following sources of information: specially qualified persons, 14.0 percent; other, which included sources such as Y.M.C.A., husbands, ministers, and welfare agency, 12.6 percent; educational group meetings or reading materials, 8.6 percent; and non-specific, which included "don't know" and whatever is available, 7.7 percent.

The sources of information desired by the respondents were related to the sex of the children in focus and to the home economics background of the mothers. Mothers of boys most frequently mentioned that they wanted assistance from specially qualified persons while this was an infrequent request of girls' mothers. Respondents with a year of high school home economics desired more information through educational group meetings and reading materials. Mothers who had taken home economics in college were more aware of a variety of sources that might be available to them as sources of information.

Sources and Types of Information and Services (Forced Choice)

In the event that mothers could not freely recall the sources that had been of assistance to them, a probing type item sought to determine whether respondents had previously had contact with specific sources. Mothers were asked, "For the next twelve types of sources which will be named specifically, try to recall any contacts of any kind since (name of child) entered first grade. Let me remind you that we want only those contacts which were related to this child in some way, but which gave you some kind of help or information about (name of child)."

Physicians. Similar percents of mothers identified family doctors and dentists as specific sources of information, 67.4 and 65.2, respectively (Table 5). Approximately 5 percent of the mothers reported a related medical source such as a nurse or a specialist. Approximately 14 percent of the mothers said that they had not received information or help about their children from physicians. Six mothers did not respond to the item.

Older mothers, 60 and above, and those with a large number of children (5 or more) were more likely than other mothers to have never used a medical source and more likely to report a variety of medical sources other than physicians and dentists. The frequency of newspapers and magazines in the home factor along with the number of children component strongly implied that the use of medical sources was related to family finances. That is, the better the family's financial situation and the smaller the family's size, the more likely that mothers had contact with medical sources.

Information received from physicians came chiefly through children's routine care, as reported by 66.4 percent of the mothers. Approximately one-third of the respondents reported receiving information or help for their children through diagnosis and treatment of an illness or through special care. Help regarding immunization or consultation about develop-

Table 5. Mothers' Sources of Assistance (Forced Choice)**

Sources of Assistance	Percent	Sources of Assistance	Percent
Physicians		Church	
Family Doctor	67.4	Sermon	57.6
Dentist	65.2	Minister	37.5
Other	5.0	Literature	36.2
Agricultural Extension Service		Discussion groups	29.2
Booklets	11.2	Programs for parents	9.6
Club meeting	8.3	Commercial Company	
Conference with agent	6.4	Insurance Company	5.4
Health Department		Employer	3.2
Visit to department	27.2	Retail stores	3.2
School nurse	15.2	Manufacturers	2.4
Booklets, pamphlets	14.2	Radio	
School		News	27.8
Teacher	60.2	Special educational programs	14.0
P.T.A.	29.6	Entertainment and family type programs	10.0
Principal	29.0	Television	
Home Economics	15.9	Entertainment and family type programs	54.0
Relatives and Friends		Special educational programs	31.8
Mother and mother-in-law	39.7	News	29.6
Other relatives	37.8		
Friends and acquaintances	37.0		
Husband	36.5		
N = 408		N = 408	

** Percentages do not total 100.0 percent for some tables because of multiple responses.

ment was received by approximately 10 percent of the mothers. As might be anticipated, help in regard to immunizations had been received more by respondents who had a small number of children (one or two) and by those who could afford to go to a doctor's office for immunizations, as observed by the large number of magazines in the homes. Following this same economic pattern, mothers with a large number of children (six or more) were less likely than other mothers to have received information through consultations, or through special or routine care. Physicians had given information relative to sexual development to about 7 percent of the mothers, most of whose families had been quite mobile (having lived in four or more communities). Mothers whose youth were involved in a number of extracurricular activities had also received more information on sexual development.

Agricultural Extension Service. The majority of mothers, 79.2 percent, indicated that they had experienced no contact with the Agricultural Extension Service regarding information relative to their children. Only 5 persons did not respond to the item. Slightly more than 11 percent of the mothers reported having used booklets as sources of information. Other Extension sources were reported by less than 10 percent of the respondents.

Mothers were more likely to have utilized the Agricultural Extension Service if they were high school graduates, showed some degree of affluence through their families' community participation, and had a number of magazines in their homes. Certain kinds of experiences such as high school home economics courses and numerous previous experiences with children also characterized mothers reporting the Extension Service as a help.

Mothers who had received information from the Extension Service

through club meetings, booklets, and conferences with Agricultural Extension agents were similar in many respects. In general, their youth were in senior high school, their socioeconomic level was higher than most as seen through their educational level, community participation, and subscription to magazines. These mothers in many cases had taken home economics in high school, had numerous experiences with children, and, as indicated by their husbands' ages (50-59), were older. There was a distinct association between the use of booklets and a college education.

Because few mothers indicated having received help or information from the Extension Service, approximately four-fifths of them did not respond when asked the type of information that they had received. The most frequent type of information received by the respondents, reported by 12.2 percent, was foods for adolescents. The other information types listed in order of percents of mothers recalling them were: family relations, 7.4; clothing for adolescents, 6.8; characteristics of development or behavior of adolescents, 6.1; and housing for adolescents, 5.8.

Mothers reported receiving information relative to family relationships; clothing, food, and housing for adolescents; and information pertaining to the characteristics of development or behavior of adolescents when their families were active in the community, when there had been a number of previous experiences with children, and when there were numerous magazines in the homes (5 or more). A college education among mothers and fathers characterized mothers' recall of information on clothing and foods. Mothers with backgrounds of high school home economics frequently reported having received information regarding family relationships and foods for adolescents.

Health Department. Approximately one-half of the mothers in the study, 58.2 percent, reported that they had received no information or help regarding their children from the health department. There was a total of 13 no responses. Approximately 27 percent of the mothers reported the health department as a source of information and this contact had usually been in the form of a visit to the department. Mothers reporting their contact as having been through the school nurse or booklets and pamphlets were 15.2 percent and 14.2 percent, respectively.

Subjects in the study most likely to mention health department sources were college graduates who were very active in community activities and who had previous experiences with several children. Visits to the health department were more frequent among mothers from nonurban backgrounds who reported having had at least four prior experiences with children and who indicated having three or four magazines in their homes. Mothers whose families were quite active in the community were more likely than others to say that they had received information from the school nurse.

The use of booklets and pamphlets was characterized more by mothers with nonurban backgrounds who held professional or technical type positions, who had graduated from college, had numerous prior experiences with children (5 or more), had active families in the community, and who had youngsters in the twelfth grade. These youth were more likely to have four or more home responsibilities. Approximately 7 percent of the mothers reported that they had received information or assistance from the health department in ways other than through a visit to the department, a school nurse, or booklets and pamphlets. The service most often obtained from the

health department was immunizations. Approximately 25 percent of all mothers reported using this service. About 10 percent of the mothers had taken their children for examinations. The discussion of children's problems with health department personnel was reported by almost 5 percent of the respondents. In essence, when mothers had an average or better education, when they and their families had many outside interests, they were more apt than others to consult with the health department regarding problems and to take advantage of the immunization services. Less affluent mothers utilized the examination program more than other mothers.

School. There were four mothers who did not respond when asked if the school had been a source of information to them. Approximately one-fourth of the remaining 404 respondents indicated that they had received no information from the school relative to help with their children. Teachers, mentioned by approximately 60 percent of the respondents, were mothers' most frequent contact with the school for informational purposes. Mothers reported receiving help with their children about as often from principals as from the P.T.A. Less than one-fifth of the respondents named the home economics teacher as a source of information.

Mothers who reported that they had used school sources had better than average educations (high school), had children in the tenth grade with two or more extracurricular activities or four or more home responsibilities, and had husbands who had completed high school or college. Furthermore, respondents had taken home economics in college, had been reared in a partially or rural nonfarm area and had four, five or more special interests such as sewing, crafts, etc. Indications were that their socioeconomic status was medium to high as observed through their social activities and through reading materials coming into their homes.

Parent-Teacher Associations had provided information mainly to families in which both parents were in professional or technical occupations and who were active in the community. The extent to which the principal was recalled as a source of information was associated with mother's occupation. Respondents who were housewives in addition to assisting with the farm responsibilities mentioned principals infrequently, while those who held operative type positions often mentioned principals. Home economics had provided information more when mothers had children in the tenth grade, when fathers had completed college, and when the children in focus were girls. Indications here were that mothers were obtaining information either directly or indirectly from the home economics classes in which their daughters were enrolled.

Slightly more than one-third of the mothers did not respond when asked the type of school source from which they had received information. About one-half of all the respondents reported having had conferences with the school. The most commonly mentioned school source of information, cited by 17.8 percent of the mothers, was programs. Booklets and pamphlets had been obtained by 11.2 percent of the respondents. A negligible percent of mothers, 3.2 percent, mentioned receiving child rearing information from adult classes.

Information derived from programs at school had been acquired more by mothers with high school home economics backgrounds who previously had a number of experiences with other children and whose husbands and children were quite active in the community As evidenced earlier, the use of

books and pamphlets from school sources was closely related to a better than average education among mothers and fathers. The fact that girls' mothers, especially those with backgrounds of college home economics, utilized books and pamphlets was probably because of their previous knowledge of materials available and of their continuing interest in daughters' home economics experiences.

The information that mothers had received from conferences with school personnel was related to their educational level and the degree of family participation. Respondents with elementary school educations or less and whose families did not participate in community activities mentioned conferences infrequently. Mothers who had numerous outside interests as well as prior experiences with children generally had participated in adult classes.

Church. Approximately one-fourth of the respondents reported that they had received no information or help from church sources. Usually these were mothers whose children in focus had no extracurricular activities or home responsibilities, whose families participated little or none in community activities, and in whose homes there were only weekly newspapers and few magazines. Church information or assistance was received more frequently by mothers whose children had two or more home responsibilities or extracurricular activities. These mothers reported four or five prior experiences with children, their families were moderately to very active in community affairs, and there were daily newspapers and five or more magazines in their homes. The most prevalent church source was sermons, reported by over one-half of the mothers. Similar percents of mothers indicated that they had previous contacts with ministers and literature, 37.5 and 36.2, respectively. Discussion groups as a source of information were mentioned by about 30 percent of the respondents. Less than 10 percent of the mothers specified programs for parents as a source of information.

Subjects were more likely to report that they had received information for parents through church programs if they and their adolescents were active in the community and if they had had several prior experiences with children. Information obtained through discussion groups was more common among mothers whose socioeconomic level appeared to be average or better as observed through the presence of magazines in the homes and family participation in the community. The more prior experiences with children that mothers reported, the more likelihood that ministers had been a source of information to them.

The type of information obtained from church sources by 45.3 percent of the mothers was usually related to a child's character and religious development. Information relative to the characteristics of development or behavior had been obtained by about one-third of the respondents. Help with personal and family problems affecting the child was reported by one-fourth of the mothers. The proportion of mothers not responding to this item was 43.4 percent. Mothers were more specific and responsive in their recall of information received from church sources when they and their adolescents had a number of outside interests, they were from partially nonfarm rural backgrounds, they were active in the community, and had several magazines (at least 5) in their homes. Information relative to a child's religious development had been received more when adolescents had two home responsibilities, the mothers had five or more special interests,

and families had high participation scores. When family participation in the community was low, help regarding personal or family problems and information relative to the characteristics of development or behavior had not been obtained. Information received from the church as a result of personal or family problems affecting the child was mentioned more when adolescents had two or more extracurricular activities and the mothers had partially rural nonfarm backgrounds.

Commercial Companies. The majority of mothers, 87.8 percent, reported that they had received no information or help regarding their children from commercial companies. A total of 8 persons did not respond to the item. When a commercial company source was mentioned, it was usually an insurance company. Approximately 6 percent of the mothers named this source.

Employers were sources of child care information more when adolescents' families showed some signs of affluence as reflected through adolescents' extracurricular activities, mothers' special interests, families' participation, and numerous magazines in the homes. Mothers recalled more frequently having received assistance from insurance companies when they had four special interests and when their families were active in community activities. Assistance from retail stores was reported more when the adolescents in focus had four or more responsibilities. Active community participation also characterized mothers' frequent recall of retail stores as sources of information.

Manufacturers had supplied mothers with child rearing information or services more when the respondents had a number of special interests, their families participated actively in community activities, and when there were five or more magazines in the homes. Mothers who were inactive in the community had received few materials from manufacturers. It was difficult for mothers to tell the type of information that they had received from manufacturers as observed from the approximately nine-tenths of subjects who did not respond to the question. Booklets and pamphlets were reported by 7.4 percent of the respondents and were mentioned most frequently by mothers in craft type occupations.

Library. The library was an infrequent source of information for mothers except among families who assumed a better than average socioeconomic status in the community as viewed from their college educations, professional occupations, and social activities. Among the 400 persons responding to the question, 82.0 percent reported that they had not used the library in bringing up their children. The library was a source to 12.2 percent of the respondents. The percent of mothers not responding to the item was 5.8.

Books were the most common library source obtained, as reported by 12.2 percent of the respondents. Booklets and pamphlets, recalled by 3.6 percent of the mothers, were mentioned infrequently but had provided information more when fathers' occupations were managerial in nature and mothers had four prior experiences with children. Mothers reported that library books had been a source of information when husbands were employed in professional or mechanical work, when they had numerous special interests and prior experiences with children, when the siblings of the children in focus (opposite sex) were older, and when families had moderately high participation scores.

Radio. The majority of respondents reported that they had not received information regarding child care assistance from the radio. The radio was a more common source of information to older mothers who had older youth and who recalled several prior experiences with other children. The husbands of these mothers, in the main, had not completed high school. The older age bracket of the mothers indicated that their more frequent use of radio was probably a habit from earlier days when radio was in its "heyday."

When asked if there had been previous contact with one or more of several specific radio sources of information, 60.6 percent of the mothers said no. Approximately one-fourth of the mothers indicated that news programs had served as sources of information for them. Special educational programs had been a source to 14.5 percent of the mothers while entertainment and family type programs were reported by about 10 percent of the respondents.

Age was an important factor in the types of radio services recalled by mothers. The acquisition of information through special educational programs on radio was associated with fathers' and mothers' age and mothers' prior experiences with children. Mothers mentioning this source were 50-59 years old, had husbands within the same age range, and had prior experiences with four children. Entertainment or family-type programs on radio supplied child care information when fathers were 50-59 years of age and mothers had prior experience with five children.

Television. A little more than one-half of the mothers reported having received information from entertainment and family-type programs. Approximately one-third of the mothers indicated that both special educational and news programs had served as sources of help or information. About one-fourth of the mothers reported that they had received no information relative to their children from a television source. A total of 6 persons did not respond to the question.

Mothers were more likely to mention that television had been a source of child rearing information if they did not live on farms and had at least high school or college educations. Respondents who had taken home economics in either high school or college and who recalled having numerous prior experiences with children likewise indicated television as a source of information.

Special educational programs on television were infrequently mentioned as providing information when mothers had elementary educations, no home economics background, and few prior experiences with children. An urban background among mothers and fathers was associated with mothers' infrequent recall of news programs as a source of information or help. The role of a home economics background in the television sources recalled is an interesting one. Mothers' home economics orientation (acquired through high school and college sources) could have made them more knowledgeable of and receptive to certain television productions such as Extension Service programs, farm programs, and other family related programs.

Newspapers. Only 6 mothers did not respond when asked if they had received information regarding their children from newspapers. Among the remaining 402 respondents, 57.2 percent stated that they had received assistance through newspapers and 42.5 percent stated negatively. Respondents mentioned newspapers more when: they had a better than average

education (college); their husbands were managers, officials, or kindred workers; and they had two years of home economics in high school or home economics in college. The families of these mothers had high participation rates, and, as might be expected, there were daily newspapers and five or more magazines in their homes.

Magazines. Fourteen mothers did not respond when asked if magazines had served as a source of information to them. Among the remaining 394 respondents, 59.4 percent reported magazines as a source and 40.8 percent replied "no" to the question. The number of associations between magazines as a source of child care information and independent variables was larger than that for other items. Mothers stating more often that they had received information from magazines were professional or technical workers, had attended trade or vocational schools, had two years of home economics in high school, and had been reared in partially or rural nonfarm areas. Their husbands were high school graduates and were employed in professional or technical occupations. The families of mothers reporting magazines as a source had moderate to high participation scores and, as might be expected, subscribed to numerous magazines (5 or more). Adolescents from these families were also active by participating in two or more extracurricular school activities.

Relatives and friends. Mothers and mothers-in-law as sources of information were mentioned by 39.7 percent of the respondents. About one-third of the mothers recalled other relatives, friends and acquaintances, or husbands as informational sources. The number of mothers not responding to this item totaled 9. The proportion of respondents who reported that relatives and friends had not been a source of information was 18.8 percent.

Younger mothers, under 40 years of age, were more likely than other mothers to rely upon their mothers and mothers-in-law. Because of their age, many respondents had parents and parents-in-law who were still living. Mothers who did not use their friends and relatives as sources were older (60 years), and from indications of educational level and magazine count, were from fairly low socioeconomic urban backgrounds. Approximately 70 percent of the mothers reported that they had received general information relating to their children from relatives and friends. Special advice from relatives and friends had been obtained by about 30 percent of the respondents.

Very Helpful Sources. Mothers were presented a card by the interviewer listing the 12 specific sources (forced choice) described in the preceding section of this bulletin and were asked, "From these 12 sources, which ones have been very helpful to you?" There were 17 mothers who did not respond Approximately 6 percent of the respondents replied that none of the sources had been very helpful. The remaining mothers (369) mentioned a mean of 2.3 sources as being very helpful.

Slightly more than one-half of the mothers mentioned church contacts as their "very helpful" source (Table 6). Relatives and friends were next in importance followed by the school and television which was approximately four times more valuable than radio as a source of information. Magazines were slightly more valued than newspapers. Relatively few mothers reported either the health department, library, radio, Agricultural Extension Service, or commercial companies as helpful sources of information. When the Extension Service was mentioned, it was by mothers who were already in-

Table 6. Very Helpful Selected Sources of Information (Forced Choice)

Very Helpful Sources	Percent
Church	57.0
Relatives and Friends	39.6
School	28.9
Television	21.2
Magazines	18.4
Physician	16.8
Newspaper	14.3
Health Department	8.4
Library	5.6
Radio	5.6
Agricultural Extension Service	3.6
Commercial Company	0.2
No help	6.0

N = 391

volved in a number of other community activities. The library as a source was more valuable to college educated mothers with many outside personal and community interests. Respondents more often indicated that none of the selected sources had been very helpful to them when they had no special interests of their own, their adolescents had no home responsibilities, and when their families showed a complete lack of community participation. It is of interest to note that the church was a frequent source of information to well-educated families with above average participation in the community, but least valued by them. Mothers whose adolescents had no home responsibilities frequently reported school as a helpful source.

Mothers more often named commercial companies as very helpful sources when they had completed college, had four special interests, and their families participated actively in the community. Similarly, their husbands had completed college and their adolescents had four or more home responsibilities. Radio sources as very helpful informants were mentioned more by mothers with elementary school educations. Respondents were more likely to report television as an important source of child care information when their adolescents had no home responsibilities and consequently were left to more indiscriminate television viewing. Television was a less important source when the adolescent in focus had four or more home responsibilities. When fathers had at least a high school education, mothers placed more value on newspapers and magazines.

Very Helpful Information. Interviewees were asked, "Which kinds of information or services that you received from the sources (forced choice) just mentioned to you were very helpful?" There were 74 mothers, or 18.1 percent, who did not respond to the question. Among the remaining 334 respondents, 3.2 percent reported that none of the specific sources named had afforded them very helpful information. Informational types received by mothers and the frequency with which they deemed them as very helpful are shown in Table 7.

The largest proportion of mothers, about one-third, reported that information of a general nature had been very helpful to them. Other very

Table 7. Very Helpful Information (Forced Choice)

Very Helpful Types	Percent
General information	33.2
Religion and character	26.6
Adolescent development	21.2
Sources of information—books and pamphlets	20.4
Physical care and well-being	13.4
Education and school relations	13.2
Special or individual problems	9.2
No help	3.2
N = 334	

helpful types that were frequently mentioned related to the adolescent and his moral development. The most helpful types of information that mothers had received from selected sources were unrelated to the demographic variables under investigation.

Information or Services Desired. As mentioned earlier in this section, mothers were shown a card listing 12 specific sources of information or help. They were asked, "What kinds of help or information would you have liked from each of the sources just named?" There were 257 mothers who responded to the question. Of this number, 27.6 percent stated that they preferred no information from the 12 sources. Information desired from selected sources is shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Types of Information or Assistance Desired (Forced Choice)

Types of Information	Percent
Education and school relations	25.6
General Information	17.8
Sources of information, books, pamphlets	10.1
Adolescent development and character	8.6
Physical care and well-being	6.2
Religion and character development	5.8
Special or individual problems	3.8
Others	3.8
No help	27.6
N = 257	

Respondents' preferences were related to the number of extracurricular activities held by their children and their families' participation. Mothers whose children had one extracurricular activity preferred less information relative to education and to school relations. Children having two or more extracurricular activities were associated with mothers' preference for information relating to physical care and well-being and to sources from books and pamphlets.

Sources of Information Desired. Respondents were asked, "With which

Table. 9. Specified Sources (Forced Choice) with Which Contacts Were Desired

Specified Sources	Percent
School	27.0
Church	8.3
Library	7.6
Agricultural Extension Service	7.4
Physician	5.6
Relatives and friends	5.1
Magazines	4.9
Health department	4.6
Television	3.2
Commercial companies	2.6
Newspaper	2.6
Radio	1.4

N = 408

sources listed here (on a card) would you have liked contacts regarding (child's name) care since he entered seventh grade?" All mothers, 408, responded to the item (Table 9). It should be noted here that mothers' responses were greater when the source was mentioned for them rather than left to their free recall.

Physicians were a frequent choice when mothers had completed college or had taken college home economics courses and when families were active in community affairs. The Agricultural Extension Service was usually preferred by women with at least a high school education and who had some background in home economics courses. The degree to which families participated in community activities was associated with their preference for health department services. Families with low participation scores preferred less health department assistance while a moderately high participation level was associated with mothers' mention of the health department. Mothers whose families were quite active in the community preferred to receive more assistance from relatives and friends than did other mothers.

The sources that mothers preferred were frequently influenced by their level of education. The school and church were desired sources of mothers who were relatively uninvolved in community activities and who had stopped school prior to high school graduation. Magazines were a desired source when mothers had attended some high school. When mothers had graduated from high school they were more likely to mention commercial companies, television sources, and the library. Newspapers as a desired source were mentioned more when the respondents had attended trade or vocational schools.

Preferred Means for Obtaining Assistance

After the question regarding the sources of help or information from which they would like to have received assistance, mothers were asked, "If you were getting help or wanted to learn about adolescents, which of these ways would you like best?" There were five possible affirmative responses.

Discussion groups, named by about 40 percent of the mothers, were most frequently mentioned. About one-fourth, 24.9 percent, of the respondents preferred assistance through reading materials. Similar proportions of mothers, approximately 10 percent, reported that they would like for someone to come into their homes or else indicated that either of the methods mentioned would be desirable to them. Someone outside of the home was a preferred means of assistance by 5.5 percent of the respondents. Those not responding to the question totaled about 3 percent and nearly 2 percent either indicated that none of the means was desirable or their response was indefinite.

Older mothers (50-59 years of age), who had a number of prior experiences with children, did not usually prefer to have assistance from someone outside of the home. They generally preferred reading materials, and, as indicated through earlier responses, did not want to depend upon other individuals for assistance, but rather, to draw upon their own prior experiences. Someone coming into the home held little appeal for younger mothers, under 40. When mothers said that they did not want any method of assistance or when they were indefinite, they usually had no special interests and were from partially rural nonfarm backgrounds.

Reasons. Regarding their preferred means for obtaining assistance, mothers were asked, "What reason do you have for this answer?" The question was by nature an open end one, but mothers' responses generally fell into one of four categories. A total of 44, or about 10 percent of the subjects, either did not respond or gave an irrelevant answer. The majority of the mothers, approximately 60 percent, reported that their preferred means of obtaining assistance (group discussion) was based upon its being more conducive to learning and understanding. Many mothers reported that it was beneficial to them to hear others discuss similar problems and the methods in which they had handled them. Other categories of responses had considerably fewer frequencies, and according to the proportion of mothers mentioning them, they were: convenience, 8.0 percent; confidence or respect for specialist, 3.8 percent; and fits personal interest, 3.1 percent. About 5 percent of the respondents gave nonspecific answers.

Special Concerns and Desired Assistance

Representative types of concerns for each of four categories—physical, social, educational, and emotional—were printed on cards and presented to the mothers during specific questioning. They were told:

> There are many types of concerns which parents of children between grades 7 and 12 have. We have selected several which are representative of these concerns and would like to ask if you have been concerned in your situation about any of these. Also keep in mind that the words "concerns" and "problems" as we have used them do not necessarily mean something of a serious nature—just anything to which you have given special thought to or felt the need for information or help.

Physical Concerns. Seven specific physical concerns were presented to the mothers. They included: attractiveness and grooming, size, health, body

coordination, eating, rest and sleeping, and sexual development. An "other" category was also included. Eating, mentioned by one-fourth of the mothers, was the most frequent concern. Similar proportions of mothers mentioned health, and rest and sleep, 19.6 percent and 19.4 percent respectively. Next, in order of the percentage of mothers indicating concern was: size, 15.4 percent; sex, 11.8 percent; and body coordination, 5.8 percent. A variety of "other" concerns was named by 7 mothers (1.7 percent.) Slightly more than one-third of the mothers either did not respond to the question on physical concerns or else stated that they had none regarding their children. As youths became involved in a number of extracurricular activities, mothers had more anxieties over physical concerns.

Approximately three-fourths of the 408 mothers either desired no information or they did not respond when asked the type of information that they desired regarding their youths' physical needs. Respondents whose husbands were from partially rural nonfarm backgrounds were more likely to desire information than other mothers and the type wanted was usually regarding adolescents' attractiveness and grooming and sexual development. Percentages for the categories were quite small and they included: attractiveness and grooming, 8.3 percent; sexual development, 8.3 percent; eating, 6.8 percent; health, 6.8 percent; rest and sleeping, 5.4 percent; size, 3.6 percent; body coordination, 2.9 percent; and other, 1.0 percent.

Social Concerns. Types under social concerns were: obedience, friends, getting along with family members, responsibility, personality, dating, effects of television, discipline, and use of time. Slightly over one-half of the mothers, 51.2 percent, either expressed that they had no social concerns regarding their youths or they did not respond to the question. The majority of the mothers indicating no social concerns were from farm backgrounds and were relatively inactive in terms of participation in community activities.

When concern occurred among mothers it was generally with children's sense of responsibility (15.9 percent), their use of time (13.9 percent), and their getting along with family members (13.2 percent). Friends, dating, and effects of television were expressed as concerns by approximately 10 percent of the mothers. The remaining classifications showed the following proportions of mothers expressing concern: obedience, 7.6 percent; personality, 5.6 percent; and discipline, 5.6 percent. Respondents with older teenagers (17 years and older) were concerned less about their adolescents' relationships with younger brothers and sisters and more by dating problems and children's use of time. Mothers with younger teenagers (under 14 years of age) indicated more problems with discipline and more concern for the effects of television. As can be observed from these findings, the age of the teenager was a function of the social concerns that mothers held for their youths.

The majority of mothers, 74.8 percent, either reported that they desired no information relative to their children's social development or they did not respond to the question. This high percentage of no response was in keeping with the large number of mothers indicating that they had no social concerns regarding their youths. Other percentages of mothers desiring information were quite small. In order of mothers' preference for specific information they were: responsibility, 8.6 percent; use of time, 7.4 percent; getting along with family members, 5.4 percent; effects of tele-

vision, 4.4 percent; dating 3.6 percent; personality, 3.6 percent; friends, 2.9 percent; obedience, 2.6 percent; and discipline, 2.6 percent. The data strongly indicated that the more previous experiences mothers had with children, the more likley they were to recognize a need and request information regarding certain aspects of their youths' social development. Implications here were that previous experiences with teenagers caused mothers to recognize a need for assistance with youths' personality development and dating practices. When mothers had prior experiences with teenagers, they began to question the effects of television on their younger adolescents and wished to have opinions on this subject from outside sources.

Educational Concerns. Classifications of educational concerns included: school work, homework, interest in or enjoyment of school and learning, getting along with teachers, interest in the future, and knowledge of sex and reproduction. Those respondents indicating no educational concerns regarding their children or else not responding to the item totaled 154, or 37.8 percent. Mothers were most frequently concerned with situations relating to school, as observed from the approximately 28 percent who mentioned school work and about 25 percent who indicated homework. Approximately 20 percent of the mothers were concerned about their children's interest in the future. Getting along with teachers was of concern to 13.2 percent of the mothers, followed by 10.2 percent who thought about their children's interest in or enjoyment of school and learning. Fewer mothers, 8.0 percent, were concerned about their children's knowledge of sex and reproduction than other educational concerns. Only 2 mothers reported "other" educational concerns.

Educational concerns were relatively unimportant in families in which the adolescents were in the twelfth grade and fathers were farmers and older (50 years or above). Farm parents, traditionally, have had lower educational aspirations for their youths. Consequently, coupled with the fact that their adolescents were in the twelfth grade and near graduation, most of the educational goals had been achieved by their youths. In general, the more active the family in the community and the younger the adolescent in the family, the more concern mothers showed toward youths' educations. A keen interest was shown in children's interaction with teachers when fathers had a number of interests and mothers had numerous prior experiences with other children. If social participation can be assumed a component of socioeconomic status, findings here reinforce the notion of a relationship between affluence and educational awareness. Concern for youths' knowledge of sex and reproduction was more typical when fathers were relatively young and held craft type occupations.

A total of 275 mothers, or 67.4 percent, did not reply when asked the type of information that they desired regarding their children's education or else they did not prefer assistance. Compared to a much smaller percentage of mothers who had no educational concerns, responses indicated that mothers wanted assistance but may have had difficulty in naming the specific type of educational assistance desired. Information relative to children's school work was the type of assistance mentioned by the largest proportion of mothers, 11.2 percent. Other percents of mothers according to the type of educational information that they desired were: interest in future, 10.5; homework, 9.6; knowledge of sex and reproduction, 6.1;

getting along with teachers, 5.4; and interest in or enjoyment of school and learning, 5.4. When mothers or fathers had a number of personal interests such as hobbies, reading, or sports, mothers tended to have more interest in acquiring booklets or pamphlets relating to youths' school work or materials indicating how to get along with teachers.

Emotional Concerns. Classifications of concerns under the emotional listing included: disposition, anger or rebellion, love, independence and ability to do things for self, character, and religion. The majority of mothers, 62.5 percent, either did not respond to the question or reported that they had no concerns regarding the emotional development of their children. Anger or rebellion concerned nearly 16 percent of the respondents. Next in importance was disposition which was of concern to 12.2 percent of the mothers. Children's religious development was of importance to approximately 10 percent of the subjects. The importance of other emotional concerns of mothers in terms of percents of respondents were: independence and ability to do things for self, 8.6 percent; love, 4.9 percent; and character, 4.9 percent. A few mothers, nearly 2 percent, mentioned "other" concerns.

Most of the 408 respondents, 80.0 percent, either did not indicate a desire for information regarding their children's emotional development, or they did not answer the question. Residence was especially important to the type of information mothers desired and if, in fact, they desired information. Farm mothers were hesitant in their requests for emotional development materials. Information about anger or rebellion, desired by 8.8 percent of the mothers, was mentioned most frequently by those who had attended trade or vocational schools. Information regarding disposition, which was mentioned by 6.6 percent of the mothers, was mentioned more frequently when fathers and mothers had either high school or college educations and were from nonfarm backgrounds.

The desire for assistance with youths' independence and ability to do things for themselves, mentioned by 6.1 percent, was more characteristic of families from higher socioeconomic circumstances as observed by fathers' above average educations, nonfarm backgrounds, and the frequency of newspapers in the homes. These characteristics were similar to those observed for mothers requesting information on character development, 3.1 percent, and of the mothers desiring assistance with religious development, 5.6 percent.

Important Concerns and Problems

Present Concerns and Suggested Assistance. Anticipating that mothers might have difficulty in responding to probing questions regarding their present and future concerns, two free recall questions were asked of them. The first question was, "For this age period, what would you say are the most important concerns parents have for a child, perhaps in the home, at school, in the community generally, or about the future?" The replies from 40.0 percent of the mothers were either nonspecific in nature or respondents had no concerns. A number of concerns, classified, "other" and reported by 7.6 percent of the mothers, included army, driving, safety, and value of money. The important concerns of mothers of boys varied, especially those of older mothers, while those of girls' mothers were more specific. Mothers' concerns generally fell into one of four categories (Table 10).

Table 10. Present Concerns Held by Mothers

Present Concerns	Percent
Social and personality development	36.9
Education	21.8
Character and religious development	11.8
Behavior or habits	9.4

N = 408

When families had been rather mobile (lived in several communities) mothers were more concerned than others regarding adolescents' character and religious development and with their behavior and habits. More concern for character and religious development was also found among mothers in families in which fathers had a high school education.

In order to draw upon the experiences and observations of parents of adolescents, mothers were asked, "In what ways do you feel parents could be helped with the concerns that you have just mentioned?" The replies of the 323 mothers responding to this question were generally indefinite or fell into broad categories (Table 11).

Table 11. Mothers' Suggestions for Assistance with Present Concerns

Methods	Percent
Indefinite	39.3
Discussion groups	18.6
Literature	12.4
Specialist	11.8
Educational programs and speakers	6.2

N = 323

Better educated mothers (high school or college graduates) were more specific about the ways in which they thought that parents could be helped with their present concerns. These mothers were also more likely than other mothers to say that parents could best be helped through educational programs and speakers or through literature. The number of children in the family sometimes determined the ways in which mothers thought parents could be helped. Discussion groups, usually an overall choice of assistance, were infrequently mentioned by mothers with only one or two children and probably because mothers with one child often recommended a specialist. Respondents who had attended trade or vocational school suggested a wider variety of assistance types than other mothers. Some of these types included: setting a good example, prayer, going to church, and films.

Future Concerns. Regarding the future, mothers were asked, "What are

some of the main problems you expect during the next few years with (name of child)?" A total of 47 mothers, or 11.5 percent, did not respond to the question. As observed from mothers' responsiveness, it was easier for them to predict future problems with their youths than to recognize (or admit to) present concerns.

Table 12. Future Problems Anticipated by Mothers

Future Problems	Percent
Nonspecific	36.6
Dating and getting married	28.0
Education	15.5
Developing independence	6.6
Sex information and understanding	1.4
Other	16.6
N = 361	

The future problems (Table 12) that mothers envisioned were closely related to the age of their children at the time of the interview. For example, mothers who were relatively young, had elementary school or high school educations, and who had daughters in their early teens (under 14) were concerned with future problems of dating and getting married. This concern was an uncommon one among mothers with college backgrounds in home economics who had eighteen year old sons. Similarly, driving cars and related privileges were viewed more as future problems by mothers with sons 15 years old and under, specifically those in the ninth grade. Mothers who along with their housekeeping responsibilities assisted on the farm and had daughters 18 years of age and in the twelth grade were concerned less with driving and similar privileges.

A certain degree of affluence among families, as observed through mothers' educational levels and numerous magazines in the homes, was associated with respondents' mention of education as a future problem. This type of concern is acknowledged as existent among middle class parents. Older mothers who had completed college anticipated problems relating to sex information and understanding. A number of miscellaneous problems were anticipated by mothers, especially those of older boys. These included: anger-depression, clothes, future military service, sports, drinking, friends and health.

Mothers were asked, "What kinds of information or helps would be useful to you in preparing for the future with (name of child)?" A sizable number of mothers, 101, or 24.8 percent, did not answer the question. For the majority of the remaining subjects, 65.8 percent, the answers were either indefinite or the mothers indicated that they did not know (Table 13). The data indicated that it was more difficult for mothers to speculate as to how they could be helped with future concerns than to indicate how parents' immediate problems could be solved.

Table 13. Mothers' Suggestions for Assistance with Future Problems

Methods	Percent
Literature	16.9
Specialist	10.2
Educational programs and speakers	4.0
Discussion groups	3.3
N = 307	

When fathers had higher than average educational levels (high school or college), mothers generally indicated that specialists, discussion groups, educational programs and speakers, and literature could best help with future problems. More of a variety of sources such as church, prayer, home economics, and television were given by respondents who were quite active in the community. This was probably because of their knowledge of a variety of sources.

Mothers' Opinions Regarding Adolescents

The last part of the questionnaire consisted of a series of miscellaneous questions that generally reflected mothers' opinions of their adolescents and their present and future concerns for them.

Adolescents' Desirable Traits. Mothers were asked, "What do you like best or approve of most completely about (name of child)?" Only 9 mothers of the 408, or 2.2 percent, did not respond to this question. Mothers giving nonspecific answers or indicating that there was nothing that they liked best or approved most completely about their children totaled 38, or 9.5 percent. The qualities (Table 14) that mothers observed in their adolescents were unrelated to the demographic variables employed in this study.

Table 14. Adolescents' Best Qualities and Habits

Attributes	Percent
Personality and social traits	50.4
Behavior	23.0
Education and intelligence	16.5
Character	13.5
Grooming and appearance	12.5
Maturity and responsibility	11.8
Talents and interests	6.0
None or nonspecific	9.5
N = 399	

Adolescents' Undesirable Traits. In order to arrive at the undesirable traits mothers viewed in their children, respondents were asked, "What are some of the kinds of problems you and (name of child) are having now?"

A total of 132, or 34.4 percent, replied that they were experiencing no problems with their children or else their answers were nonspecific. When undesirable traits (Table 15) were mentioned they usually were either related to lack of responsibility or to social interests or traits. Typical problems grouped as "other" and mentioned by 14.8 percent of the mothers included: eating, lazy, use of money, long hair, short skirts, and consciousness of appearance.

Table 15. Adolescents' Worst Qualities or Traits

Undesirable Characteristics	Percent
Irresponsibility	14.6
Social interests	14.0
Undesirable social traits	10.6
School and educational difficulties	9.4
Emotional problems	7.2

N = 296

The data implied that a low socioeconomic status (as observed through the frequency of magazines and newspapers in the home) was associated with mothers' unwillingness to name or their inability to recognize undesirable traits in their youths. The social status, as viewed through the families' participation rate in the community, had considerable bearing on the traits that mothers felt to be undesirable. Generally speaking, the more social participation of the family, the more concern mothers held for youths' irresponsibility and social interests. The reversal of this observation was seen among mothers from nonparticipating families. That is, the less social participation, the more school, educational and intellectual difficulties mentioned.

Publications

Familiar. Earlier in the interview, a total of 40 paperback books and pamphlets from varied sources and containing information relative to adolescence were presented to the mothers. Mothers in turn indicated to the interviewer which titles (exact or similar) were familiar and to which publications they would have liked to have had access.

The majority of the respondents, 60.5 percent, either did not respond when asked if they recognized familiar publication titles, or else they recognized none. Among the remaining 161 mothers, a total of 773 publications were mentioned as familiar.

When mothers did recognize familiar titles, publications were most likely to be of the health, safety and preventive care types. Sex education publications were recognized by the second largest percentage of mothers. Preparation for marriage, education and occupation, religion and character, and general development publications were recognized to a similar extent by about 15 percent of the mothers. Titles relating to social and personality

development, and to miscellaneous topics were recognized less frequently than other titles.

Table 16 shows a listing of familiar publication titles reduced to general classification types in the order of frequency of mothers' recall.

Table 16. Publications Familiar to Mothers According to General Type

Classification Type	Percent
Health, safety, and preventive care	22.8
Sex education	18.1
Dating and preparation for marriage	15.2
Education and occupation	13.2
Religion and character	13.2
General development	13.0
Social and personality	11.0
Miscellaneous	10.5

N = 161

Publications were recognized more readily by mothers who had better than average educations (high school or college) and whose families appeared to embrace a higher level of living status as observed through their high participation rates in the community and their subscription to numerous magazines. A home economics background was also associated with mothers' recognition of familiar publications. This finding is justifiable in that many publications are distributed through home economics related programs such as the Extension Service, 4-H and F.H.A. organizations, and adult programs.

It was apparent that materials relating to a child's general development and to dating and preparation for marriage came chiefly from home economics related sources since mothers recognizing these types generally had received home economics training in high school. A paucity of literature in the homes as observed through subscriptions to newspapers and magazines was associated with mothers' unfamiliarity with educational and occupational, safety and preventive care, and social and personality type materials.

Preferred. Following their identification of familiar publications, mothers were asked to look over the listing and to indicate those publications to which they would like to have access. Exactly 14.0 percent of the mothers either did not respond or said that they desired none. The remaining 351 respondents desired a total of 4,151 publications. See Appendix B for total listing. Ranked in order of their desirability the top eight publications according to General Classification type are shown in Table 17.

It can be observed that the types of publications that mothers of adolescents most frequently desired were related to dating and preparation for marriage, moral development, and occupational preparation. At least one-half or more of all mothers desired at least one publication under each classification type. When mothers showed a previous preference for litera-

ture through their subscription to numerous magazines, they very frequently desired more publications. The miscellaneous publications included areas such as beauty and teenage driving.

Table 17. Publication Types Desired

General Classification	Percent
Dating and preparation for marriage	78.0
Religion and character	75.6
Education and occupation	71.3
Social and personality	66.4
Health, safety, and preventive care	62.8
General development	62.3
Sex education	56.8
Miscellaneous	46.4

N = 351

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SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This bulletin reports on the information and services obtained and desired by 408 rural mothers of adolescents. The study had three objectives: (1) to determine the sources from which parents of adolescents received information and services regarding child care and development; (2) to determine the types of information and services regarding child care and development which were received; and (3) to determine the types or sources of information and services for which parents expressed a need. The sample consisted of 408 rural mothers of children aged 13 to 19 selected at random from school records from a three county area. A series of 45 questions were asked the mothers by trained interviewers and responses were tape-recorded. There were both free recall and forced choice questions.

Those demographic data found most frequently in association with mothers' responses were: the number of magazines in the home, family participation in community activities, education of the mother and the father, mother's prior experience with children, frequency of a newspaper received in the home, child's extracurricular school activities and home responsibilities, and the home economics education of the mother. Seldom observed as functions of the information and services obtained and desired by mothers were: the sibling order of the adolescent in focus, the location of the home, the age of the adolescent in focus, the number of communities of residence, the number of siblings, and bedroom mates.

Mothers experienced considerable difficulty in recalling the sources of information that they had used in rearing their adolescents. The difficulty increased when mothers were asked the type of information received and their most valuable types and sources. Most respondents did recall at least one source of information. It was noted that when mothers' responses were probed their sources of assistance differed somewhat from those initially recalled. For example, reading material was the most frequent source of assistance reported by mothers during primary recall, whereas, upon closer questioning the school assumed importance. At any rate, reading materials, the school, and the church were the most frequent sources of assistance to mothers. Mentioned less frequently were television, radio, the health department, the Agricultural Extension Service, and physicians. Mothers who had several interests or hobbies outside of the home and who were active in the community were more likely to mention these latter sources. Mothers mentioning the Agricultural Extension Service frequently had been exposed to home economics, either through their own high school or college courses or through daughters' classes.

As might be expected, reading was a more common practice among the better educated mothers (high school or college educations). Reading materials generally had been in the form of magazines, newspapers, and church literature. Few mothers except those with high school or college educations had utilized libraries. The nature of the pamphlets to which mothers had been exposed was generally health and safety, sex education, and dating and preparation for marriage.

When the school was a source of information to mothers the contact usually was with teachers. Mothers of younger adolescents, in particular, showed much interest in their youths' relationships with teachers. Mothers who had utilized school and church sources of information were better edu-

cated and more economically advantaged than other mothers, but mothers from low educational level backgrounds more frequently reported concern for their youth's learning difficulties. Although concerned, poorer educated mothers showed little initiative or desire to contact the school for assistance.

Mothers' recall of relatives and friends as sources of information was less frequent as their own age increased. Contrary to earlier studies in this series, relatives and friends other than "grandmothers" assumed importance. Similarly, physicians showed a downward role in providing mothers with child rearing information, except among mothers from higher socioeconomic backgrounds with only one or two children.

The church was considered the most important source of information. This was probably because of mothers' continuing interest in their youths' religious and character development. It should be recognized that approximately 98 percent of the sample were church members. Mothers often reported that it was of value and comfort to them to freely discuss and exchange similar problems with other persons, especially with those to whom they have frequent access.

Reading material, initially named most frequently by mothers as a source of information, was not valued to any significant extent. It is conceivable that the literature in many cases was not adapted to the educational level of the majority of the mothers (9.2 years). It was noted that a close relationship existed between mothers' use of reading material and their educational level.

When television was specifically mentioned, many women acknowledged it as a source of information. Entertainment and family type programs emerged as the major source of child rearing information within this media. Mothers from higher educational levels were more likely than others to recognize television productions as yielding information regarding children or family life. A higher level of living appeared to be associated with mothers' mention of television than of radio sources.

The types of information usually received by mothers were nonspecific. Indications here were that mothers had either received quite an array of types, or, they were not sure about what they had received. It was likewise very difficult for mothers to recall the types of information that had been most helpful to them. When responses were elicited, mothers said that "general information" had been most valuable.

Mothers showed considerable hesitancy or inability to relate certain types of concerns that they held for their youths, particularly mothers from lower socioeconomic circumstances. Respondents in general exhibited little concern for their adolescents' sexual development, yet the types of publications that they indicated that they would most like to receive were related to dating and preparation for marriage. Information relative to sex information was of more concern to younger parents (under 40 years of age), and probably because they indicated envisioning problems with their youths' sexual development.

The age of the adolescent was an important function of the social concerns held by mothers. The social concern that was most prevalent among mothers was youths' irresponsibility. This trait seemed to be most characteristic of older adolescents 18 or 19 years of age. Anger and the traditional "rebellious" nature of the teenager were the major emotional con-

cerns of mothers. The difficulty with which mothers admitted to the emotional concerns that they held for their youths indicated that for many there was still some stigma attached to the subject. There was evidence that questions concerning youths' emotional and social growth assumed lesser importance among the less affluent mothers. It is recognized that parents in this stratum are sometimes reluctant to acknowledge emotional or social concerns with their children because of the possible inference that they had been unsuccessful in their parental roles.

When left to freely recall the kinds of help that they wished were available to them, mothers generally said "none". Ideally, this would imply that rural mothers were relatively self sufficient in their roles. Realistically, the implications appeared to be that this meant either a lack of knowledge of the sources that were available to them, or else, difficulty in freely recalling a source. With some probing, schools emerged as the source with which mothers would most prefer more contact. The value of discussion groups was reiterated upon various occasions through mother's mention of them as a preferred method for receiving information.

There was less hesitancy among mothers to relate the desirable traits in their adolescents than their concerns for them. Mothers in most cases stated that they most admired their youths' personality and social traits. Again, youths' irresponsibility was the foremost dislike of mothers. This trait was especially displeasing to mothers who appeared to be somewhat more affluent as observed through their social participation and educational levels. This observation complies with the middle class notion that idleness does not beget progress.

How did rural mothers feel that parents could be helped in the future with adolescents' development and ensuing problems? Unless mothers had obtained above average educations, they usually were indefinite or said that they did not know. This uncertainity on the part of respondents was probably related to the nonspecificity of their concerns revealed earlier as well as a lack of knowledge of the sources that might be available to them. Mothers showed the same uncertainty when asked how parents could be helped with future problems. But, perhaps rural mothers' frequent indefiniteness could best be typified in one mother's response when she said, "It's a serious age and it's 'kinda' hard to understand."

LITERATURE CITED

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APPENDIX A

Demographic Data

Data for the sample were obtained initially from twenty-seven items of information during interviews. Following are the familial characteristics of the 408 rural mothers involved in the study.

I. CHILD

A. Age	Number	Percent
13 years or younger	69	16.9
14 years	80	19.6
15 years	82	20.0
16 years	72	17.6
17 years	62	15.2
18 years	35	8.6
19 years	7	1.7
20 years and over	1	.2

B. Grade in school	Number	Percent
Seventh	46	11.4
Eighth	93	23.0
Ninth	83	20.4
Tenth	56	13.8
Eleventh	63	15.6
Twelfth	63	15.6
Out of school (graduated)	1	.2

C. Sex	Number	Percent
Male	179	43.9
Female	229	56.1

D. Number extracurricular activities (Included here were activities associated with the school program such as: 4-H, scouts, music, dancing, etc.)	Number	Percent
None	163	40.0
1	133	32.6
2 or more	112	27.4

E. Number home responsibilities (Included here were activities out of school such as: church, scouts, sports, music, etc.)	Number	Percent
None	41	10.0
1	159	39.0
2	124	30.4
3	60	14.7
4 or more	24	5.8

F. Number sharing bedroom with child	Number	Percent
None	146	36.1
1	189	46.8
2 or more	69	17.0

II. MOTHER AND FATHER

A. Age	Father Number	Father Percent	Mother Number	Mother Percent
39 and under	105	28.9	175	43.0
40-49	166	45.7	171	42.0
50-59	77	21.2	57	14.0
60 and above	15	4.1	4	1.0
Mean age:	44.9		41.8	
Age range:	27-76		28-66	

B. Occupation	Father Number	Father Percent	Mother Number	Mother Percent
Professional technical	12	3.3	10	2.4
Farmers	62	17.1		
Managers, officials, proprietors	33	9.1		
Clerical, sales and kindred	27	7.4	22	5.4
Craftsmen, foremen and kindred	97	26.8	34	8.3
Operatives and kindred	103	28.4	99	24.2
Other service workers laborers (including unemployed)	28	7.7	24	5.8
Housewife, only			148	36.2
Housewife, assists farming or other work of husband secondary occupations			71	17.4

C. Education	Father Number	Father Percent	Mother Number	Mother Percent
0-8 years	186	51.5	157	38.7
Some high school (may include trade or vocational school)	83	23.0	110	27.1
High school graduation	73	20.2	112	27.6
Trade, industrial, or vocational school after graduation, some college	10	2.7	14	3.4
Completed college and above	9	2.4	13	3.2
Range of education:	0-21		0-18	
Mean years of education:	8.4		9.2	

D. Reared on farm	Father Number	Father Percent	Mother Number	Mother Percent
Yes	266	73.2	273	67.6
Partially or rural nonfarm	66	18.2	78	19.3
Urban	31	8.5	53	13.1

E. Number of special interests (included here were: music, sports, reading, civic affairs, movies, T.V., etc.)	Father Number	Father Percent	Mother Number	Mother Percent
None	27	7.4	50	12.3
1	132	36.4	113	27.8
2	115	31.8	120	29.6
3	57	15.7	75	18.4
4	23	6.4	32	7.8
5 or more	8	2.2	16	3.9

F. Home economics education of mother	Number	Percent
None	205	51.5
1 year in high school	53	13.3
2 or more years in high school	129	32.4
College (including combination with high school)	11	2.8

G. Mother's prior experience with children (number of ways)	Number	Percent
2 and fewer	184	45.0
3	140	34.3
4	77	18.8
5	7	1.7
6 or more	0	0.0

H. Family participation score*	Number	Percent
None	56	13.7
1-10	192	47.0
11-20	114	27.9
21-30	33	8.0
31 and over	13	3.2
Score range:	0-68	

III. SIBLINGS

A. Number (includes half-siblings)	Number	Percent
None	16	3.9
1	71	17.4
2	95	23.2
3	59	14.4
4	57	14.0
5	33	8.0
6 or more	77	18.8
Range:	0-13	

B. Position of siblings	Number	Percent
Older only, same sex	21	5.2
Older only, other sex	28	6.8
Older only, both sexes	36	8.8
Younger only, either sex	123	30.2
Combination older (same or both sexes) and younger	125	30.7
Combination older (other sex only) and younger	58	14.2
Only child	16	3.9

*The family participation score is half of the combined scores for the father and mother, based on their degrees of involvement in community organizations as determined by a social participation scale adapted from Chapin, Stuart, Experimental Design in Sociological Research. New York: Harper and Row, 1955, pp. 276-77. Permission for use obtained from the publishers with credit to the author.

IV. RESIDENCE AND HOME

A. Location	Number	Percent
Open country	205	50.4
Clustered (pop.: 1-49)	138	34.0
Hamlet (pop.: 50-249)	12	3.0
Village (pop.: 250-2, 499)	51	12.6

B. Number of different communities of residence	Number	Percent
1	234	61.9
2	80	21.2
3	42	11.1
4 or more	22	5.8

C. Frequency of newspaper	Number	Percent
Daily	247	60.5
Weekly, bi-weekly, or irregularly	107	26.2
None	54	13.2

D. Number of magazines	Number	Percent
1 or 2	118	28.9
3 or 4	126	30.8
5 or more	97	23.8
None	67	16.4

APPENDIX B

Titles of selected publications and numbers of mothers preferring each.

Rank	Number	Publication Title
1	178	Understanding Our Teenagers
2	175	When Children Start Dating
3	171	Facts of Life and Love
4	156	Helping Brothers and Sisters Get Along
5	146	Helping Children Develop Moral Values
6	145	Why Wait Till Marriage?
7	139	How to Help Your Child in School
8	136	How to be a Better Teen-Age Driver
9	133	In All Good Faiths
9	133	Your Child's Future
10	130	Keep Them in School
10	130	Too Young to Marry?
11	128	Your Child's Sense of Responsibility
12	119	Smoking, Health, and You
13	118	Boy Today, Man Tomorrow
14	117	Preparation for Marriage Leaflets
15	116	What I'd Teach My Children About Alcohol
16	113	Your Child's Friends
17	106	How to Get and Hold the Right Job
18	101	Emotions and Physical Health
18	101	Growing Up and Liking It
19	100	Good Sportsmanship
20	94	Boys Want to Know
20	94	Guiding Children's Social Growth
21	93	Juvenile Delinquency
22	92	Venereal Disease
23	91	Adolescent in Your Family
24	89	Good Reading For Parents
25	87	Girls Want to Know
26	85	Building Your Philosophy of Life
27	84	Good Health--Key to Better Living
28	83	Home Health Emergencies
29	80	How to Protect Children Against Prejudice
30	73	How to Help Your Teenager Catch Hold of Tomorrow
31	72	Beauty Habit
32	59	Mass Media and the PTA
33	43	Should You Go to College?
34	28	Growing Up Emotionally
35	12	Faith is a Family Affair
36	1	When the Unexpected Happens
TOTAL	4151	